

CPF program educates producers on biosecurity techniques

An intensive biosecurity education program focused on smaller commercial poultry producers, launched in July 2003 by the California Poultry Federation (CPF) with funding from USDA Rural Development, recently concluded after reaching out to hundreds of producers throughout Central California.

The \$75,000 grant was aimed at smaller poultry companies who may lack the proper resources to conduct biosecurity programs. The program's goal was to educate poultry producers about proper biosecurity techniques to guard against a wide variety of poultry diseases.

The program was successful beyond expectations, says CPF President Bill Mattos. "The lack of proper biosecurity methods is a challenge for many of our smaller producers," he said. "This outreach program provided training to those small producers and processors who provide products into many of the ethnic and niche markets and often lack the necessary resources to obtain proper biosecurity training."

Seminars featured biosecurity experts

A series of seminars throughout the year sponsored by the CPF featured a series of speakers who addressed the threat of a variety of poultry diseases and how the industry can best prepare itself to deal with future challenges.

Seminar speakers included Dr. Carol Cardona, UC Davis Poultry Extension Veterinarian; Dr. David Castellan, veterinarian, California Department of Food and Agriculture, Dr. Mark Bland, Dr. David Willoughby, CDFA, Foster Farms veterinarian Dr. Robert O'Connor and Dr. Nancy Reimers.

"We want to thank those veterinarians who took the time to make this educational effort such a success," said Mattos. "Their expertise and insights have proved invaluable in educating our producers on a topic that directly affects the economic well being of our industry."

The educational effort has produced several resources that are available to California poultry producers interested in learning more about biosecurity. Those resources include:

Biosecurity Resource Website

The CPF has created a website devoted to the topic of poultry biosecurity. The website contains information resources from the seminars, in addition to providing links to websites hosted by the USDA, CDFA and UC which provide additional biosecurity information for producers. The website is located at http://www.cpf.org/Environment/Biosecurity_main_page.htm

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Biosecurity Video Tapes

A videotape on biosecurity procedures has been produced by the USDA and the CPF has distributed dozens of these tapes to producers. Copies of the tape are available from the CPF and are available at all biosecurity education meetings.



Dr. David Willoughby, California Department of Food and Agriculture, addresses those attending a Jan. 21, 2004 biosecurity education seminar in Modesto sponsored by the California Poultry Federation.

On-Farm Biosecurity Audit

CPF members can sign up for a biosecurity audit of their facility. The audit will be conducted by a veterinarian who will visit the farm to assess the operation and offer biosecurity recommendations. Biosecurity training is also available for ranch personnel.

Biosecurity Warning Signs

Another important outreach tool has been production of biosecurity warning signs available in both English and Spanish. The signs reference recently enacted no-trespassing legislation authored by Sen. Chuck Poochigian (R-Fresno) that makes trespassing on lands where animals are raised for human consumption a misdemeanor punishable by six months in jail and/or a \$1,000 fine. The signs are available by contacting the CPF office at (209) 576-6355 or email CalifPoultry@cs.com.

Trespassing signs need to be visible and plentiful

Members of the California Poultry Federation are reminded that "No Trespassing" signs being posted on poultry operations throughout the state need to be highly visible and plentiful in order for there to be a violation of the provisions of the no-trespassing legislation recently signed into law.

The bill, SB 993 (Poochigian) provides that in order for there to be a violation of the provisions of this bill, the trespass signs must be displayed at intervals of not less than three signs per mile along all exterior boundaries and at all roads and trails entering the land.

"We have distributed hundreds of signs already and have ordered plenty more," says CPF President Bill Mattos. "The response from our members has been great. They see these signs as another effective component of an overall biosecurity plan to protect their ranches against unwanted poultry diseases."

The bill expands the definition of trespass to include entering lands on which animals for human consumption are being raised or injuring or carrying away animals on these lands without permission of the owner or damaging or destroying fences or signs to designate the boundaries of those lands.

Existing law provides that every person who willfully commits a trespass (as defined by the code) is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by up to six months in jail and/or a fine of up to \$1,000.

The measure also specifies that the provisions of the bill shall not be construed to preclude prosecution or punishment under any other provision of law that provides for a greater penalty or a longer term of imprisonment.

If you haven't ordered a sign yet, contact the CPF office at (209) 576-6355 or email califPoultry@cs.com.



Biosecurity prevention efforts stressed as California guards against future poultry disease outbreaks

by MARNI KATZ

Special to the California Poultry Federation

When Exotic Newcastle Disease struck the Southern California poultry industry two years ago, the industry was admittedly blindsided by the scope and scale of affected backyard poultry. With that wake-up call, a coordinated effort by poultry industry groups, academia and government agencies, has made poultry producers—from large commercial poultry operators to cottage industries such as backyard gaming, specialty markets or live bird industries—more prepared to prevent and extinguish an outbreak should it occur again.

And experts say that while the 2002 outbreak is now considered contained, the threat remains high that an outbreak of disease such as Exotic Newcastle Disease (END) or Avian Influenza (AI) could again occur in California.

"Almost every year we get an introduction of Exotic Newcastle Disease into California from a pet bird, usually from South America, and END has not been eradicated in Mexico, so as long as it is there we will always be at risk," says Dr. Richard Breitmeyer, state veterinarian with CDFA, who oversees the agency's Animal Health Program.

AI is also exploding in many Asian countries, and the U.S. poultry industry and regulators are concerned that highly pathogenic AI virus strains, which might also be transmitted to people, will find their way into the U.S. perhaps through waterfowl migration patterns or bird-to-person contact.

The consequences of an outbreak of either disease to California's \$2.5 billion-dollar poultry industry could be devastating—ranging from the destruction of millions of birds to the loss of critical export markets and thousands of jobs.

Dr. Robert O'Connor, manager of health services for Foster Farms and an active proponent on biosecurity issues, says END and high path Avian Influenza are especially threatening to the industry because they spread easily.



No Trespassing signs, prominently located around the perimeter of a ranch, are critical components of a good biosecurity program. Shown, from left, are Jim Haley, Daniel Haley, and Kim Haley-Hernandez.

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Dr. Carol Cardona, UC Davis Poultry Extension Veterinarian, discusses the main principles of biosecurity at a Modesto seminar sponsored under the CPF's biosecurity education program.

AIR QUALITY, continued from front
ily and result in very high mortality rates for infected birds.

"And from a regulatory standpoint, they are completely regulated by the U.S. government, so the government would decide the action to take on flocks that become infected with one of those two diseases," O'Connor says. "And the only position available now is to depopulate infected flocks in order to stamp it out."

O'Connor says California remains especially susceptible to an outbreak because of its influx of tourists and transient labor force and the prevalence of backyard poultry and game fowl that are often less monitored and raised in multi-age situations where disease introductions can become endemic.

As a result, the responsibility has fallen on everyone from large commercial poultry producers down to small breeders and hobbyists to work together at preventing an outbreak before it strikes and takes hold in the state.

"Biosecurity needs to be a long-term state-of-mind for poultry producers."

- Dr. Robert O'Connor

Biosecurity needs to be a long-term state-of-mind for poultry producers, O'Connor says. All sectors of the poultry industry are threatened by the possible outbreak of such diseases as Exotic Newcastle Disease or Avian Influenza, and as such, they must work together as neighbors to prevent a potentially devastating outbreak that could easily travel from one sector to another, he says.

Breitmeyer says the 2002-03 outbreak of END in

Southern California that severely damaged the layer industry and led to the depopulation of millions of birds, was a reminder of how serious the consequences of an outbreak can be and how interconnected the various factions of poultry producers have become.

"That was a stark reminder to everybody how serious biosecurity is, but unfortunately people have short memories and sometimes forget how devastating these types of diseases can be," Breitmeyer says. "It also reminded us that the ag/urban interface is bringing rural and backyard poultry producers closer together and they need to work together to prevent additional outbreaks."

Various industry sectors as well as backyard producers have been working together in conjunction with state and federal government agencies and UC Cooperative Extension agents to create extensive biosecurity programs that not only can help prevent the introduction of a serious disease such as END or High Path Avian Influenza, but also have a plan in place to contain an outbreak immediately should an introduction occur.

"That is why we are putting our focus on good surveillance," Breitmeyer says. "We want to have a program in place to keep it out and if it does get in, to contain it and stamp it out quickly before it spreads."

Dr. Annette Whiteford, director of Animal Health and Food Safety Services at CDFA, says the focus for all California poultry producers—whether backyard game bird breeders or large commercial layer or broiler producers—needs to be on prevention. That prevention program, she says, should focus on the three components of a good biosecurity program: 1) Traffic Control 2) Isolation and 3) Sanitation. (See sidebar on page 3)

Whiteford says CDFA, through its Avian Health Program, is helping to make training resources such as multi-lingual training videos and person-to-person training available to operators and employees at poultry facilities and other outlets. CDFA now works in tandem not only with industry groups such as the California Poultry Federation, but also with academia from the University of California and other agencies including the USDA to get producers the resources they need to help prevent and address a potential contamination quickly, before it can spread.

USDA has adopted a proactive stance toward poultry biosecurity and is temporarily providing funding for most of these preventive efforts. In addition, the California Poultry Federation is providing educational on-site signage to various poultry producers as part of its ongoing educational effort.

Cumulatively, these efforts place the emphasis on edu-

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BIOSECURITY, continued from front

cation and prevention in addition to plans for quick mobilization should an outbreak occur.

"We now have the resources, manpower and funding, to get immediately ahead of an outbreak."

-Dr. Richard Breitmeyer, CDFA

"These are some of the lessons learned from the Southern California END outbreak," Breitmeyer says. "We now have the resources, manpower and funding, along with USDA, to get immediately ahead of an outbreak should it occur to overwhelm it and get it under control quickly."

"We also have a degree of interaction with the entire community of bird-owning people," Whiteford adds. We have pet owners, commercial industry and hobbyists who understand they need to work together to maximize containment in any industry related to biosecurity."

O'Connor says most groups and individuals within the various poultry factions are getting the message, although there is still more work to be done, particularly at the employee level.

"Commercial operators need to take the initiative to motivate their employees and educate them about which diseases we are most at risk and have the most to lose

from," O'Connor says. "Then they need to explain to them how practicing biosecurity can reduce the risk of contracting those diseases in the flocks. You have to make workers competent before you get them committed to the actual execution of biosecurity."

"You have to give employees a personal stake in why these precautions are important."

- Dr. Annette Whiteford

Whiteford, who was the lead CDFA commander during the recent END outbreak, agrees.

"You need to make the employees stakeholders to help them understand why biosecurity is important to them," she says. "We are trying to take this beyond just giving them instructions to giving them a personal stake in why these precautions are important."

CDFA is also partnering with several entities, including industry, the University of California Cooperative Extension and the USDA to educate backyard and hobby bird flock operators about the importance of biosecurity.

"This is a population we discovered often has poor access to veterinarian care and expert information," Whiteford says. "We are still focused on finding the best method to communicate information into these backyard

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North Valley Task Force members who help monitor ongoing poultry disease issues were honored recently by CPF Chairman Don Jackson, right. Honored were David Pittman, Rheal Cayer, Dr. Annette Whiteford, Bob Shipley and Andrew Carlson.

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flocks. Part of our outreach goes through feed stores and veterinary practitioners who would see pet birds, pet bird clubs, CDFA's Fairs and Expositions branches, and UC Cooperative Extension."

Like most large poultry operators, smaller poultry and game bird producers have quickly come to understand the importance of establishing a good biosecurity program at their facilities, says Bob Shipley, president of Squab Producers of California, a Modesto, Calif.-based cooperative with 80 members from Fresno to Marysville.

"The first case of PPMV1 (pigeon paramyxovirus 1), which is a relatively mild Newcastle disease of pigeons, cropped up in the mid-1980s and it was our industry's first outbreak of a virus like that, so it forced an awareness on our members about the importance of biosecurity that wasn't there before," Shipley says.

"Biosecurity went from zero to 100 on our awareness scale after that."

In the last five years, particularly since the Southern California END outbreak, virtually all members of the Squab Producers, which are typically small, part-time producers with multi-use operations, have put biosecurity programs in place on their operations.

Shipley says squab producers have initiated quality assurance measures that include signage on the property; limited access to the plant by human visitors and outside, free-flying birds; rodent control; disinfection such as boot dips and cleaning; and regular documentation, among other things.

"We also participate with the CDFA to randomly check farms on an annual basis and we've never had a failure by our growers," he says. ■

MAIN PRINCIPLES OF BIOSECURITY

Traffic Control, Isolation and Sanitation

The three components of an effective biosecurity program and some examples of how to implement them:

TRAFFIC CONTROL

1. Keep logbooks of visitors to facilities.
2. Maintain fences and signage related to biosecurity.
3. Minimize farm-to-farm human traffic.
4. Be sure truck drivers, repairmen, delivery personnel, etc., wear protective foot covering and clean coveralls at facility.
5. Know history of visitors.
6. Do not visit other farms unless necessary.
7. Establish zones around different farms of company and keep employees from traveling from one zone to the next.
8. Require and/or provide freshly laundered clothes for employees each day.
9. Isolate dead bird disposal outside the perimeter of the ranch.
10. Impose self-quarantine if you suspect infection.

ISOLATION

1. Prevent introduction of new birds to a previously infected facility for 2-3 weeks.
2. Clean out vegetation around poultry houses to remove shelter and food for possible carriers.
3. Develop control program for various vectors, such as wild birds, insects, or rodents.
4. Prevent accumulation of standing water to discourage waterfowl.
5. Limit food sources for wild and free-flying birds.
6. Educate employees about dangers of live bird markets, encourage them not to raise their own poultry or come in contact with outside poultry.
7. Advise employees to avoid dead wild and free-flying birds.

SANITATION

1. Use an effective disinfectant and follow careful regiment to regularly disinfect facilities and equipment.
2. Wash and disinfect vehicle tires and wheel wells to remove litter and feces.
3. Wash and disinfect bird hauling equipment and vehicles, and clean-out equipment taken from farm to farm.
4. Enclose dead birds headed for lab in plastic bags, confine live birds and protect against contamination from the lab.
5. Wash and disinfect all egg trays, carts and racks. Remove all feathers, feces and egg material.



KEEP OUT!
BIOSECURE AREA

Trespassing is a violation of Section 602, California Penal Code, and punishable by fine and/or imprisonment.



¡NO ENTRE!

ÁREA de BIOSEGURIDAD

Intrusión es una violación de Sección 602, Código Penal de California, y castigable con multa y/o encarcelamiento.

